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STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

# THE NATO ADVANTAGE: STRATEGIC ANTICIPATION AND ADAPTATION

BY

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# THE NATO ADVANTAGE: STRATEGIC ANTICIPATION AND

#### **ADAPTATION**

Ву

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#### ABSTRACT

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Since its formation in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty
Organization (NATO) has been challenged and tested on numerous
occasions. Arguably, its greatest test came at the abrupt and
unanticipated conclusion of the Cold War. The Alliance was faced
with a dramatically altered European and world security
environment in political, military and economic terms. After 40
years as a Cold War icon, there were many "experts" and analysts
who questioned the Organization's purpose and relevance. Could
NATO adapt to and manage the remarkable change occurring nonstop
around them?

NATO's enduring strength however, has always been its ability to anticipate and adapt to change. It has historically adhered to a very effective "adaptation" philosophy that had become inherent to the Organization through the years. That philosophy was formalized, developed and adopted as an Adaptation Strategy in the early 1990's. The general intent of the Adaptation Strategy was to shape the Alliance to make it more

effective in its ability to deal with new and evolving security challenges of the post-Cold War era.

This paper examines NATO's Adaptation Strategy, its major components, and their effectiveness in shaping and dealing with today's global transnational security environment. Understanding the components of the Adaptation Strategy is absolutely critical. Their success will ultimately determine the relevance and strength of the Alliance as it moves into the new millennium.

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# THE NATO ADVANTAGE: STRATEGIC ANTICIPATION AND ADAPTATION

#### INTRODUCTION

Today's technology allows us to see our world from the vantage point of astronauts. Clear, crisp video footage from the space shuttle and satellites reveal a vibrant blue globe in constant motion and change, with clouds, currents and water masses perpetually swirling across continents and oceans. Those dynamic physical phenomena, in many ways, reflect an even more turbulent global society.

The phenomenon of change, sweeping, dramatic and farreaching, is certainly not uncommon in our world history. In the
past ten years however, that phenomenon assumed gargantuan
proportions. Startling advancements in science and technology
have brought these changes home to even the most remote locations
on our earth. As we approach the new century, technology
continues to grow, and so too it seems the dynamics of the global
economic, political and military terrain.

Established and fledgling nation states, international and regional political and economic organizations, alliances -- they are all grappling with a transnational environment that is comparable to the newest thrill ride at Walt Disney World - seemingly perilous, unpredictable and moving at breakneck speed. This tumultuous and mercurial period has challenged even the most

hearty and established institutions. This paper will examine the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and its strategy to navigate and ride these swift, turbulent and often menacing rapids of world change.

#### **PURPOSE**

Since 1989, the number and enormity of key world events have been unparalleled. The fall of the Berlin Wall followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact were all monumental events unforeseen by even the most capable intelligence organizations. They certainly caught both sides of the Cold War by surprise and off guard. How then, while most of the world was bewildered and dazed by the suddenness of these revolutionary changes, was NATO able to respond swiftly and sustain its relevance and purpose?

Since its formation in April 1949, the strength and viability of NATO have been challenged and tested on numerous occasions. Never more so than in this decade as the Alliance has had to confront and adapt to an extremely dynamic European and world security environment. Strategic clarity of focus in anticipating and adapting to change has always been the NATO advantage. The Alliance has historically adhered to a very effective "adaptation" philosophy that has become inherent to the Organization over the years. The Committee on Non-Military

Cooperation reaffirmed the philosophy in its 1956 report, "NATO's character and capabilities should be constantly adapted to changing circumstances." The philosophy was formalized, developed and adopted as an Adaptation Strategy in the early 1990's. The general intent of the Adaptation Strategy was to shape the Alliance in such a way as to make it more effective in its ability to deal with new and evolving security challenges of the post-Cold War era.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to examine NATO's Adaptation Strategy, its major elements, and their effectiveness in shaping and dealing with today's transnational security challenges. Understanding the elements of the Adaptation Strategy is key, as their success will ultimately play heavily in determining the strength and relevance of the Alliance in both the near and long term. To accomplish this purpose requires some understanding of NATO's recent history and the origin of the Adaptation Strategy, and so the paper begins with a brief historical overview.

#### RECENT HISTORY AND STRATEGY ORIGIN

The London Summit in June 1990 resulted in the London

Declaration where NATO formally acknowledged the need for a

significant change in direction as an Alliance. This declaration

began the process to develop its "adaptation" philosophy of many

years into a well-defined strategy. With the demise of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, much of the old Cold War precepts of NATO defense had lost their relevance. A new strategy, better suited for a New World order, had to be developed to preserve and enhance the Alliance's role in European and world security affairs. The Soviet Union had disappeared as the paragon threat to security and stability and with it the threat of an overwhelming, short-notice attack on Western Europe. However, in that void grew security threats of a different breed, "multifaceted in nature and multi-directional, making them hard to predict and assess."<sup>2</sup>

In response to these new security risks and challenges, the Alliance developed a lucid and innovative strategy continuum of Adaptation - a comprehensive, continuous transformation process that allows the Alliance to recognize and respond to changing environments and their parallel security requirements.

Though collective defense has been and is still the cornerstone of NATO, the Organization recognized very quickly that countering new and unpredictable threats meant new missions much broader in scope than only collective defense. This understanding helped to further develop the Adaptation Strategy into Internal and External Adaptation initiatives. These initiatives were developed specifically to posture the Alliance politically and militarily to assume a broader and stronger role in European security affairs.

# INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ADAPTATION - GENERAL BACKGROUND

Internal initiatives were driven by the new crisis management and peace support missions. NATO needed to be able to respond quickly to a wide range of unpredictable and fast-moving crises and contingencies. Again, collective defense was still the core mission, but recent experience was beginning to reflect increased involvement in operations varying from peace keeping and peace enforcement to humanitarian assistance. The other very significant factor was NATO's willingness to respond "out of area" — beyond the traditional territorial borders of the Alliance. This practice clearly signified a recognition that European security and stability were not exempt from transnational influences. To ensure a peaceful and stable Europe, the Alliance would have to be willing and prepared to shape and engage those "out of area" influences.

The new role and new missions were a significant departure from Cold War strategies and required a different force (in structure and training) and a different military command structure. Smaller, lighter, more flexible, more mobile - those were the buzzwords of the day to describe NATO's transforming military capability.

Another key element of Internal Adaptation is the Combined

Joint Task Force (CJTF) which is the means to achieve the ability

to react quickly and decisively in a crisis. They are highly mobile, multi-national, multi-service task forces specifically organized to respond to the "crisis of the day" and other contingency operations such as peace support and humanitarian assistance mentioned earlier.

Internal Adaptation also means strengthening the Euro-Atlantic relationship while enhancing the role and responsibilities of European members within the Alliance -- all in concert with other European organizations. This initiative is referred to as the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI).

External elements of the Adaptation Strategy were shaped by the "outreach" concept. The Alliance believed that reaching out to non-NATO countries in political and military forums would enhance dialogue and cooperation. This in turn would steadily build greater trust and confidence in its maturing relationships with former adversaries of Central and Eastern Europe. Outreach is also referred to as "projection of stability" and ultimately will promote peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area through strengthened political and military relationships. 3

The core elements of External Adaptation include the Enhanced Partnership for Peace (PfP), the Mediterranean Dialogue, and the Enlargement process. PfP has proved invaluable as a forum to draw in and interact with the former Warsaw Pact and other non-NATO nations. It has cultivated trust and cooperation, and forged "a genuine security partnership" with them. The

participation of PfP members in NATO functions has evolved rapidly and today includes almost every aspect of training and real world operations. "Enhanced" PfP refers to the great increase in the types of missions and training PfP nations can now directly participate in, and their expanded involvement in NATO's political process. The Alliance significantly enhanced the program in this way because of its early success.

The Mediterranean Dialogue is the result of the Organization's anticipation that security issues in that region will directly influence European stability. It is an attempt to shape that environment and the security concerns it represents. This initiative is comparable to Partnership for Peace in that the Alliance has invited prominent nations from the region to participate as Partners in political dialogue and cooperative efforts. These efforts center around mutually beneficial fields such as information systems, science, civil emergency planning, and civil-military cooperation.

The enlargement process is easily the most controversial and most publicized. NATO is presently preparing for the accession of three new members, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. Though many questions and issues are still churning in regard to this initial step in the process, the real concern is what happens next. If the enlargement process continues, which countries will be invited to join, when will it happen and what are its ramifications for European stability?

These elements of the Internal and External Adaptation
Strategy, though well developed and in place, are constantly
refined and improved as the Alliance continues to anticipate and
react to evolving and formidable security trends. A closer look
at each individual element will assist in understanding how they
are related, and how crucial they are collectively to the overall
Adaptation Strategy, NATO's future, and European security.

#### INTERNAL ADAPTATION - FORCE STRUCTURE

A prevailing tendency amongst many countries following the end of the Cold War was to draw down their military force structure. The absence of a large and looming conventional threat inevitably raised the question of how much and how soon defense spending and forces could be reduced. Austere economic conditions and concern over long neglected social programs further accelerated military cutbacks. Restructuring forces under those conditions, while also reorganizing for new missions, was certainly a most daunting task for NATO. Let us look at some of the ways the Alliance performed this task.

Changes in NATO force structure have been dramatic. Since 1993 there has been a 25 percent reduction in overall peacetime strength. There has been a 35 percent reduction in the total number of Alliance ground combat units, and a reduction of over 45 percent in the peacetime strength of NATO's land forces in the

Central Region. A large portion of the total land force requirement is based on mobilizable augmentation units -- reserve units that are essentially in a lowered state of readiness which can be activated to respond to crisis situations. These units would eventually relieve the immediate response active forces.

Reductions also included a decrease by over 30 percent in the number of naval combatant units to include aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers, frigates and submarines assigned to NATO and historically deployed to the NATO area. The total number of combat aircraft assigned to NATO and stationed in Europe declined by 40 percent, with a 45 percent decrease in air forces in the Central and Northern Regions, and a 25 percent reduction in air force reinforcements from North America. Suclear forces committed to NATO have also been greatly reduced, specifically sub-strategic weapons based in Europe by 80 percent.

This significant reduction in force structure and levels of readiness was mitigated by a new concept based upon force flexibility and mobility. This concept calls for a small but highly ready force as the immediate response to a threat or crisis. This initial task force would be quickly bolstered by a larger reserve component.

NATO's significantly reduced force structure and smaller percentage of forces at peak readiness have accentuated the urgency for modernization as well as increased mobility and flexibility. State of the art weapons technology, improved

interoperability and C4I (Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence) systems will have to help bridge the gap between a smaller force size and new mission requirements.

NATO force composition today consists of three categories:

Immediate and Rapid Reaction Forces, Main Defense Forces, and

Augmentation Forces. Rapid Reaction Forces are the versatile,
highly mobile, air, ground and maritime units at peak readiness
and prepared to respond immediately to a crisis. The Main

Defense Forces are now the major element and consist of
multinational and national active units. These units can be
mobilized while at different levels of readiness to reinforce and
support the Reaction Forces. The Augmentation Forces are ground,
air and naval units that can be used for deterrence or crisis
management situations, but are generally at lower states of
readiness.8

#### INTERNAL ADAPTATION - INTEGRATED COMMAND STRUCTURE

Force restructuring also included streamlining the
Integrated Command Structure which resulted in the elimination of
Allied Command Channel, leaving only two Major NATO Commands,
Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) and Supreme Allied
Commander, Atlantic (SACLANT). These major commands report
directly to the NATO Military Committee and are supported by
Major Subordinate Commanders (MSC's). The number of MSC's was

cut from 18 to 16 which resulted in a significant decrease in the size of headquarter staffs.

This new command structure is intended to be smaller, more mobile and more easily deployed. It is a profile that fits well with NATO's reorganized force structure and the broad range of its new missions. It has also enhanced European influence by providing additional leadership positions for senior European military officers. One fairly contentious issue yet to be resolved is the nationality of the Commander for the Southern Region, a key command position currently and historically occupied by a United States military flag officer. This debate reflects undercurrents related to ESDI initiatives to further enhance the role and numbers of European Commanders.

#### INTERNAL ADAPTATION - COMBINED JOINT TASK FORCE

The Combined Joint Task Force (CTJF) is NATO's vehicle to deploy the right sized force, with the right capabilities, on short notice to meet the requirements of a military mission, possibly "out of area." More formally, it can be described as a deployable multinational, multiservice force, generated and tailored for specific contingency military operations which could involve any of the missions discussed earlier. 10

Conceptually, it will allow "a coalition of willing Alliance members to use NATO assets in conducting operations that appear

important to them, even if they are not mandated by the obligatory mutual self-defense clause (Article 5) of the North Atlantic Treaty." The inference here is that NATO operations today and in the near future may very probably not involve part or even most of the Alliance. Direct participation of individual member nations will greatly depend upon the nature and extent of the mission.

NATO recently tested the CJTF concept during the Crisis

South phase of Exercise Strong Resolve 98 in the southern region of Europe. The exercise consisted of three separate task forces supporting a peacekeeping operation and involved both Alliance members and Partnership for Peace nations. It tested the flexibility and mobility of three task force headquarters to deploy from their locations in the United States and Europe.

They were required to be in place and fully functional within 7 to 15 days. The exercise also tested their ability to stage and perform command and control functions at unconventional locations such as amphibious command ships based at sea. NATO hoped to "glean greater insight into the right size and shape for the core of combined joint task force headquarters."

# INTERNAL ADAPTATION - EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE IDENTITY

The European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI), as a practical concept, has been in various stages of development for almost eleven years. It represents an initiative to strengthen the commitment and responsibilities of European members of the Alliance. Though it sounds fairly simple and straightforward, there are significant implications associated with this element of Internal Adaptation. Let us look at a few of the most important concerns.

very obvious concern and raises a number of noteworthy questions. Does a stronger European identity necessarily mean a reduced, less influential role for the United States? If so, what are the implications regarding U.S. funding contributions and availability of U.S. strategic forces? Would a reduced U.S. presence and leadership role cause a leadership vacuum and instability as some of the stronger members vie for greater influence? Or will the opposite occur where in the absence of American interest, disunity induces indifference and ineffectiveness? The great danger Alliance members are very sensitive to is any possibility of a return to the fervent nationalism that typified Europe in pre-World War II days.

Nationalism and rivalry would clearly undermine NATO and only

serve to promote mistrust, uncertainty and inevitably armed conflict.

The good news is that American interest and participation continue to be strong. Recently however, there have been some disturbing signs that should signal the Alliance that it may be growing complacent. The lack of awareness regarding significant NATO issues among the general public of member countries is troublesome and should be cause for concern, particularly when public disinterest leads to a similar reaction at the political level. In the United States the danger lies in a consummate concern for domestic issues at the expense of foreign policy and relations. A combination of a strong push for increased European leadership within the Alliance, and a continuing American focus towards internal concerns and other areas of the world, could eventually diminish the leadership role and influence of the United States in NATO.

Another significant concern regarding ESDI lies in the area of nuclear weapons, specifically in attempting to determine the "arrangements that address a common nuclear umbrella." Determining the role, if any, of France and Britain's nuclear capabilities is a very complex and potentially controversial process, which presently generates more questions than answers.

Despite these concerns and the numerous substantive debates it tends to provoke, ESDI continues to be a positive part of the Internal Adaptation process. The Organization reached a major

milestone when it finally achieved transatlantic consensus at the Berlin ministerial meeting in June 1996 to pursue actively a European defense capability. They agreed that ESDI would be developed within NATO. This decision was critical because it gave the Organization the opportunity to shape the evolution of ESDI on its own terms. It will be able to manage ESDI and ensure its evolution is not at the expense of a strong Euro-Atlantic relationship.

The foundation from which ESDI will build is undoubtedly the strengthening relationship between NATO and the Western European Union (WEU). The WEU is a European defense organization formed shortly after the Second World War primarily to encourage European cooperation and unity, and suppress tendencies of some countries to pursue national policies and nationalistic programs. It has been largely ineffective and has only recently enjoyed a resurgence of political and military influence. There are now regular meetings and increased consultation between the two organizations. There has also been good progress integrating the WEU into NATO planning and exercises. The goal is to adapt NATO's new force structure and command and control hierarchy to the possibility of supporting WEU operations. This will provide a "European defense capability without the cost of duplicative military structures. $^{''16}$  The availability of NATO forces for WEUled operations would be determined "case by case" by the Alliance. 17

NATO'S ESDI challenge will continue to be a sensitive balancing act between managing the focused interest and appropriate role of the United States, and at the same time enhancing the effectiveness of the European contribution.

Achieving the right balance has the potential to strengthen the Alliance. A NATO with a strong European identity and a healthy and confident Euro-Atlantic relationship will surely be in a better position to keep the peace in Europe.

#### EXTERNAL ADAPTATION - PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE (PFP)

Let us shift course a moment and discuss those elements that comprise the partner strategy to Internal Adaptation, and that is the complementary strategy of External Adaptation. We will begin with a closer look at the Enhanced Partnership for Peace (PfP).

PfP has enjoyed extraordinary success since its unheralded beginning in January 1994. The program was a U.S. initiative and was originally considered a rather feeble and very lukewarm attempt to respond to those calling for NATO expansion. The Alliance was endeavoring to improve stability in Europe by promoting democracy, economic growth and military cooperation with and between the newly independent Central and East European nations. PfP, through the multilateral political cooperation framework of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), was the initial response to acknowledge the positive actions and

progress of many of the former Warsaw Pact countries. These countries were trying very hard to introduce democratic and free market reform, and were calling for closer and stronger ties with the West. The Partnership also proved to be a very convenient forum for non-NATO Western European nations desiring limited or selective participation with NATO. PfP specifically aimed to:

facilitate transparency in national defense planning; ensure democratic control of defense forces; maintain the capability and readiness to contribute to operations under the authority of the UN and/or the responsibility of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); develop cooperative military relations with NATO, for the purpose of joint planning, training and exercises in order to strengthen the ability of PfP participants to undertake missions in the fields of peacekeeping, search and rescue, humanitarian operations, and others as may subsequently be agreed; developing over the longer term, forces that are better able to operate with those members of the North Atlantic Alliance.

Participants were required to sign a Framework Document in which they affirmed their "commitment to the preservation of democratic societies and the maintenance of the principles of international law." They promised to "fulfill in good faith the obligations of the charter of the United Nations and the principles of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights." They also agreed to "refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state; to respect existing borders; and to settle disputes by peaceful means." 19

Gaining commitment to these stabilizing objectives and ideals from 28 Partnership nations was an extraordinary and very powerful achievement for the Alliance, and a big step toward a much stronger European security environment. Much of the program's success can be attributed to the 16 + 1 formula which individualizes the relationship of each Partner with the Organization. The Partnership is between the 16 members of the Alliance and the individual Partner. It also allows Partnership members the flexibility to determine the extent and area (type of mission and/or training) of their participation. It is a personalized partnership which takes into account the specific desires and needs of the Partner together with Alliance considerations and objectives. Details of the Partnership are then reflected in a formal Individual Partnership Programme agreement which can be approved only by the North Atlantic Council (NAC).20

Some rough going was experienced in the early stages of PfP development. The costs associated with training and exercise participation, and the procurement of requisite equipment, were prohibitive for a number of countries. The Organization was quick to respond however, and increased the PfP budget by 27 percent. Additionally, some East European countries viewed the PfP as a measure designed to indefinitely forestall full NATO membership. As it became clear though, that the enlargement process was going to happen, and as the substantive advantages of

PfP membership became more apparent, acceptance and participation grew very rapidly. The Partnership brought extensive consultation and cooperation in the practical and very useful areas of defense planning, military strategy, force and command structure, and exercises. Another advantage for Partners was the opportunity to draw from NATO's experience in civilian/military relations in a democracy. This important process has been very beneficial to many of the struggling and newly democratic states of Central and Eastern Europe.

Another element key to the success of the Partnership program was the determined effort by the Partners to improve interoperability with NATO. Interoperability was clearly a critical "must meet" objective if cooperation during actual contingency operations was to become a reality in the future. It was also a daunting task for many of the countries. Most of them had never done business the NATO way. They trained extensively in NATO doctrine, procedures and practices to enhance their ability to work effectively within NATO or NATO-led organizations. They also began a procurement and transition process to improve equipment compatibility. 23

Their efforts were promptly put to the test by the grim and extremely volatile Bosnian crisis. NATO assumed the lead for the United Nations as the only regional security organization capable of performing a peace support mission of the breadth and duration that the crisis might potentially require. The Implementation

Force (IFOR) and Stabilization Force (SFOR) peace operations in Bosnia have involved fifteen PfP countries including Russia. The very successful integration of the Partners and their significant contributions to a very tough mission have positively underscored PfP's utility and growing potential.<sup>24</sup>

Because of the early though somewhat surprising success of PfP, the Alliance voted to enhance it at the most recent Heads of State Summit held in Madrid in July 1997. The scope of activities open to Partner involvement was greatly expanded.

Militarily, PfP members will participate in every phase of NATO operations to include armament cooperation, crisis management exercises, civil emergency planning as well as peace support operations. Their participation in these activities will continue to grow, particularly as every NATO committee eventually becomes a part of the PfP process. Partnership Officers will also fill the newly established Partner Staff Elements (PSE's) at every level of the Alliance staff structure. They will also be assigned operationally to CJTF's for crisis management operations.

Partners will become intimately involved in force planning through the Planning and Review Process (PARP) which will be conducted at the Defense Minister level. PARP will provide the political leadership and guidance to help determine the type of contributions and the appropriate level and extent of involvement PfP members might make to actual NATO operations.

Another key initiative in the enhancement of PfP came in the newly formed Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) which recently replaced the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). The EAPC is the political vehicle intended to strengthen and develop "a direct political relationship" with Partners, to enhance "decision-making opportunities" and increase the range of subjects for consultations. These subjects will include "crisis management, arms control, proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), international terrorism, defense planning and budgets, defense policy and strategy, security impacts of economic developments, nuclear safety, and defense related environmental questions."25 That NATO would open consultation on such an expanded range of key issues normally reserved for consideration by NATO members only, is unprecedented. It is a clear signal reflecting the Organization's true confidence and lasting commitment to the Partnership program.

#### EXTERNAL ADAPTATION - THE MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE

The Mediterranean Sea is "rapidly becoming a fault line between two separate and increasingly polarized regions." Stephen Calleya expresses a commonly held viewpoint that the Mediterranean has long been a barrier between Western Europe and North Africa and the Middle East. An opposing view supports the idea that the Mediterranean region is an autonomous one,

characterized by "common goals and institutions."<sup>27</sup> Still other analysts assert that "the southern Mediterranean and Middle East form an arc of crisis or an arc of instability because of the region's economic stagnation and rapid population growth."<sup>28</sup> They further describe the Mediterranean basin as an area saddled with security problems beyond those related only to economics. It is a region that "continues to be threatened by such non-economic factors as military rivalries, indigenous arms production, and the purchase of high-technology weapons abroad."<sup>29</sup>

Despite the contrasting views surrounding the Mediterranean, and in particular the North African and Middle Eastern areas, there is certainly agreement on one observation: the region's security challenges are many, significant, close in proximity to Europe, and transregional. NATO's initiative in the Mediterranean basin is really a strategy to begin to manage those multi-faceted security challenges before they disrupt regional stability. The Alliance, through a cooperative effort with other organizations in the European security structure, has taken steps to enhance economic ties in trade, investment, maritime transport, and development and distribution of natural resources. There are however, very significant political, social and military security implications that must also be addressed.

Unstable governments, extremist ethnic and religious groups, violent insurgency movements, the proliferation of weapons of

mass destruction (WMD), and the proliferation of higher tech weapons such as ballistic missiles are destabilizers that characterize this region. Significant environmental degradation issues and water access are also fast-growing concerns. Add in uncontrolled population growth to the security equation, and you have a future most political and socio-economic experts project as ripe for violence and instability. Many states in the region are completely lacking in the requisite infrastructure to support their societies - housing, food, water, employment, health care, and sanitation. This condition spurs mass human migration to developed countries, and is a phenomenon that has already begun to threaten stability in Europe today. This is another transregional issue that will continue to grow in significance and will have to be addressed cooperatively through a collective forum.

NATO recently formed the Mediterranean Cooperation Group (MCG) to engage and manage some of these security issues. The MCG is a forum that allows direct communication between the Alliance and its Mediterranean Dialogue Partners (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia). As a result of decisions made at the Madrid Summit, the MCG will promote political dialogue in the 16 + 1 format at the political adviser level.<sup>30</sup>

Though the MCG is still very early in the development stages, the Dialogue Partners are actively participating in NATO

schools and are training in peacekeeping, civil emergency planning, arms control and verification, and security cooperation. This is a progressive partnership that the Alliance anticipates will lead to greater cooperative efforts and stronger, more trusting relationships. Eventually it hopes to address the pressing political and economic problems in the region through a collective effort.

There are also plans to pursue military interaction, but limited in scope to very specific humanitarian activities such as peacekeeping. The participation of three Partner nations (Jordan, Morocco and Egypt) in IFOR and SFOR military operations in Bosnia is clearly a big step in the right direction. The success of these new partnerships has the potential to expand security cooperation in the region. At the very least, these new relationships will give the Alliance a timely conduit to the nature, extent and potential impact of security threats that seem able to cross regional lines effortlessly.

# EXTERNAL ADAPTATION - NATO ENLARGEMENT

At the Madrid Summit, NATO continued the enlargement process by inviting Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to begin accession talks. The goal is to complete the accession process and formally induct the three prospective members on NATO's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1999. The accession announcement and the

concurrent declaration that the Alliance was strongly committed to continuing the enlargement process, grabbed the headlines and only intensified the debate among "experts" that had begun months earlier. The pros and cons of the enlargement process and their implications have been hashed and rehashed in countless articles, studies and testimonies, and by "experts" in every related area, from politicians and diplomats to academicians and analysts.

Opponents of NATO expansion have voiced a host of concerns that are very critical of the process and portray it as a destabilizing influence. They contend that enlargement is potentially threatening to European and world stability for reasons we will discuss shortly. Many argue that Alliance decisions that have driven the enlargement process have been made with very little substantive or critical debate within its political structure. They assert that the ramifications of such a powerful and momentous initiative were hardly considered.

Additionally, for reasons most experts still find puzzling and very difficult to explain, this historic step has generated very little interest or concern among the general public on both sides of the Atlantic. In the United States, a recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center revealed some startling statistics - though 63 percent of Americans were in favor of expansion, only 10 percent could name even one of the three countries invited to join NATO. This public indifference tends to work against opponents of expansion. As a perceptive Jeremy

Rosner, head of the Administration's Office for NATO Enlargement Ratification so aptly stated, "the less the general public cares about an issue, the greater the influence of those who care a great deal." 32

The lack of public interest is also reflected in the United States Senate where the NATO enlargement debate has been described as superficial, and the outcome of a normally rigorous ratification process seemingly preordained. The argument and concern that many on both sides of the Atlantic may not truly understand or appreciate the additional commitments and responsibilities associated with the enlargement process, may be a viable one. The far more disturbing inference though, is that many on both sides of the Atlantic may just not care — and to take such a significant step under those circumstances may eventually prove to be a rash and reckless decision.

Expansion opponents also argue that cost continues to be a mystery. Original cost estimates from the Congressional Budget Office, the RAND Corporation and the Department of Defense (DOD) ranged from 27 to 125 billion dollars over a ten-year period. 33 After these figures were first published, their credibility was immediately undermined because of the great disparity between them, and because they appeared to be manipulated to serve the purpose of either supporting or opposing the expansion effort. Questions were also raised regarding the various methods used to derive the cost figures. The various cost estimates all seemed

to be based on different assumptions. For example, the original estimate published by DOD shortly after the Madrid Summit was actually based on the accession of more than three new members. Certainly this perceived carelessness served only to cloud the issue further.

The cost dilemma is one area in which the Alliance has been inconsistent. The lack of a clearly articulated, unified position has added to the confusion and misunderstanding. Even today, there is still a sense of uncertainty concerning the willingness of individual Alliance members to assume the additional costs associated with enlargement. Clear and precise language from the Alliance with strong support expressed publicly by individual members would reassure critics and help lend greater credibility to U.S. Administration and DOD estimates. The most recently published DOD analysis estimates a total cost of 1.5 billion dollars over ten years with the U.S. share calculated at 400 million dollars. This is another significant change from figures published only a month earlier.

There is also concern regarding the long-term unfavorable effects of "interoperability" costs on the economies of the prospective new members. Ambassador Jonathan Dean made precisely that point during his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with his statement, "Eastern European candidate countries are faced with a costly and unneeded remilitarization precisely at a time when they have to focus

their resources on economic and social reconstruction. They will not be able to afford these force increases, whose cost has been estimated by the Congressional Budget Office at six times their current defense budgets."<sup>35</sup> The prospective new members are all newly democratic and are still struggling to strengthen their democratic institutions. Their success or failure will be tied to a great extent to their ability to improve their quality of life and their civil societies. That effort in turn, is directly related to strong and steady economic growth. The extent to which increased defense expenditures will detract from that growth is a key question and an understandable cause for concern.

Many candidate nations, mistakenly or not, are also wagering that NATO membership will eventually lead to and even accelerate membership in the "elite" European Union (EU). There is a strong hope that NATO and EU enlargement will be a complementary and parallel process. The EU's very deliberate pace up to now however, may be indicative of divergent strategies or at least a different timetable. Those opposed to enlargement argue that membership in the EU would be of much greater benefit to the Central and Eastern European countries vying for NATO membership. In their view, strong economies generally equate to stable democracies, which eventually will lead to a more stable security environment.

The most serious reservations expressed by many expansion opponents concern the potentially catastrophic effects of

expansion on frail Russian internal stability, and the subsequent after-effects on Russian relations with the United States, Europe and the rest of the world. The Alliance has worked long and hard since the early 1990's to pursue an effective dialogue with Russia to strengthen the NATO-Russian relationship. These efforts culminated in the signing of the NATO-Russian Founding Act in May of 1997, which created a formal association between the two former adversaries. The Founding Act is the fertile ground from which to grow a mutually productive security partnership. The Act established the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) which is the vehicle for regular consultations and coordination on political and security concerns and issues. The PJC meets regularly at various levels from the Ambassador and Minister level, to the Chiefs of Defense/General Staff and experts level.<sup>37</sup>

Despite these significant strides made recently by the Organization to improve security relations with Russia, the issue of expansion continues to churn Russian emotions. Yuli Vorontsov, Russia's Ambassador to the United States, very recently wrote, "Russia's attitude toward enlargement has been and remains unequivocally negative. The signing of the Russia-NATO Founding Act does not alter that attitude in any manner. NATO is a military alliance, and its military machine is getting closer to the boundaries of Russia." He further stated, "we have brought to a minimum the degree of harm of some of the

negative elements (of expansion), but the influence of these elements is still being felt. One example is the delay in Russia's ratification of the Start II Treaty, which is to a major extent due to NATO enlargement."<sup>39</sup>

Mr. Vorontsov's comments hit squarely on an argument consistently carried forward by expansion opponents: that the enlargement process will force Russia to rely more heavily upon nuclear weapons to offset their tremendous decline in conventional military capability. They also contend that it will derail the all-important process of reducing the numbers of nuclear weapons. The outcome could be another version of the old Cold War stand-off, smaller but potentially as lethal. This time however, the roles would be reversed and Russia would be the one more reliant upon and more prone to use nuclear weapons to protect what it strongly considers to be vital interests on its Western borders. Despite prolific pro-enlargement rhetoric specifically aimed at diminishing the significance of those vital interests and any perceived threat that enlargement may pose to them, Russian concerns about them are very real and should weigh in the decision process.

Expansion proponents however, argue that NATO is hardly a concern to the average Russian. Recent polls show that 50 percent of the Russians surveyed had not even heard of NATO's plans to expand. Those Russians who are aware are generally apathetic about NATO and are more concerned with domestic issues

dealing with crime and their economy. Proponents also argue that continued enlargement is the only solution to avert instability and the possibility of war in the long run. They contend that the process will surely preempt the potential for political and military rivalry over the Central and Eastern European area.

## CONCLUSION

Both sides present very convincing arguments for and against NATO enlargement. The imperative for NATO, however, is to remember that the enlargement process is only one part, albeit a very significant part, of the overall Adaptation Strategy. a strategy with a host of moving parts that complement and support one another. How well these elements of Internal and External Adaptation come together will ultimately determine NATO's success in achieving stability and lasting peace in Europe and the surrounding regions. The enlargement process must be balanced with the other elements of the strategy. If not managed carefully, enlargement can actually undermine, not strengthen Euro-Atlantic relations, NATO-Russian relations, and the historical core of the Alliance itself - the credibility of Article 5, the mutual self-defense clause. The Alliance should evaluate what it learns from this initial experiment of assimilating three former Warsaw Pact members before publicly committing to the who, when and how of future accessions. Most

importantly, the Alliance must fully debate, understand, come to a healthy consensus, and articulate precisely the "ends" the enlargement process is intended to achieve.

As we approach the new century, NATO appears well positioned to continue and even enhance its role as the most successful and enduring alliance in history. The Adaptation Strategy has been instrumental in guiding the Alliance through a challenging and unpredictable post-Cold War era. Its success can be directly related to the Internal and External Strategy elements discussed in this paper. These core elements of the Adaptation Strategy have allowed the Alliance to respond effectively to the security threats of today and shape the security environment for the trends of tomorrow.

It is a strategy that is constantly reviewed and improved to prepare the Alliance with the "ways and means" necessary to continue to anticipate and adapt in an ever-changing transglobal environment, an environment where European regional stability can and will be influenced by events occurring countries and oceans away. Those events will be driven not only by traditional political and military factors, but by economic and social conditions as well.

For the past two years, NATO has been looking ahead in its development of a follow-on strategy to further define and secure its role in a new era and a new millennium. It will be a role that continues to be characterized by strength and relevance as

long as the Alliance remembers its perpetual guiding philosophy of strategic adaptation.

Word Count - 6922

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- <sup>7</sup> Rob de Wijk, <u>NATO on the Brink of the New Millennium</u> (London: Brassey's (UK) Ltd., 1997), 44.
  - 8 NATO Basic Fact Sheet No. 5, 3.
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- 16 Ibid.
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  - <sup>24</sup> Ibid., 18.
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